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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

12 March 1959

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NUCLEAR-TEST TALKS

There is no sign of an imminent Soviet move to break off the negotiations at Geneva on a nuclear test cessation agreement. In his initial reaction to the American draft article introduced on 10 March which provides for indefinite duration of the proposed treaty, Soviet chief delegate Tsarapkin charged that the West is seeking to give any party the unilateral right to withdraw from the treaty on the basis of an "arbitrary evaluation" of the effectiveness of the control system. While implying ultimate rejection of the proposal, however, Tsarapkin reserved the right to elaborate at a later time on his "preliminary" comments.

Soviet propaganda promptly charged that the American draft article on duration "would assure a possibility for the United States to resume tests at any time"--a reference to

language in the draft making duration subject to the inherent right of any party to withdraw if provisions of the treaty are not observed.

After the meeting in Geneva on 9 March several members of the Soviet delegation, including the chief delegate himself, individually approached members of the American delegation suggesting that, "since we obviously have nothing to talk about now," the meetings should be cut down to "one or two a week." Since Moscow probably believes it has fully developed its position for the record, this apparent desire to prolong the talks suggests that the Soviet leaders hope to avoid the possible unfavorable effect that a break-off of negotiations at this time would have on their campaign for East-West talks on the Berlin crisis.

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